

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT, CLARENDON, VT.

TO THE SCHOOL DIRECTORS AND CITIZENS OF CLARENDON:—

Since the plans and aims of our schools work were so fully and definitely given in the Superintendent's report of last year, it is unnecessary to go over the work again, and hence this report will be more brief.

The plans of the work as discussed in the last report have been put into successful operation the past year.

Especial emphasis has been given to the training of chil-

dren "to think", and to develop a power of the mind which can do things when the children get out of school into life's work.

Considerable attention has been given to the study of elementary agriculture, music, drawing and general culture. Not as much has been done in some schools in these lines as might be done, yet generally there has been a marked improvement in the training in the cultural and commercially useful subjects.

It is impossible for children to master any subject, or to gain any great amount of knowledge of facts in the short part of life which they are in our common schools, but they can get a training which will help their minds to work to know how and where to find knowledge of facts and events that will give them a power of efficiency for education and usefulness in future years.

The school accomplishes its great mission if it gives the children such a training as to enable them to go on gaining and using knowledge and power.

That the work of the schools of this town have made successful growth during the past year is very evident. The thinking and working powers have increased.

The average standing attained in the recent mid-year examinations given in all the schools, is higher than one year ago. Though the results of these tests in several cases were very disappointing, the general average is very encouraging. The improvement is shown, more evidently and accurately in the daily work than in the examinations. The schools are not yet doing what they should, but we are making progress. It will take some time and much effort to bring and keep the standard of the work to what it should be.

We expect that those who graduate from the nine years' course this coming June, will be well prepared for High School, and thoroughly grounded in the principles which are essential for their life's work. None of the pupils who cannot, or will not, do such necessary creditable work, need expect to graduate.

Generally the working spirit of the children is good, but

some fail to realize the value of their opportunities and that life is real. Many of such hope for much, but fail in disappointment. Success in anything is not attained without work and earnest effort.

The town has maintained seven schools during the past year. Most of the teachers have worked in their respective schools all or a large part of the year. There has been two changes in the Springs school, one in the Chippenhook, and one in the East school.

One important feature of the success of our schools is the permanency of the teaching force. There should be much care in the selection of the right teacher for the position, and much better results can be obtained if the same teacher remains in the school for a few years. Very often the length of the teacher's service depends upon the peculiar whim of some particular family of the district.

Very few people of the district can rightly judge the work of the school, for they are so little acquainted with it. Many who never go near the school assume to know all about it. It is impossible to judge the success of any enterprise without a more definite knowledge.

Often if the teacher is liked by certain persons of the district, the school is considered a success. If she is disliked, it is considered a failure. This may or may not be true, but it is no fair means of judging.

The schools of the town have generally gone very smoothly the past year, and credit is due the teachers for their careful work, and to the children for the good spirit of work which many have manifested.

The graduating exercises of the ninth grade of the schools of the town were held in the town hall at the close of the Spring term 1909.

All the schools united with the graduates in making a very entertaining program. All parts were well rendered, and the

children won much praise for the very interesting entertainment which was enjoyed by a large and very appreciative audience of the town's people.

Two boys and two girls were graduated and received diplomas.

The salaries of the teachers of this town compare very favorably with the towns about us. Good salaries is one of the strongest means for keeping good teachers.

There is a strong agitation throughout the state to make a law that no teacher shall receive less than nine dollars per week. If we are to secure and keep good teachers, a living wage must be paid.

During the past year the schools have been supplied with some readers, new arithmetics, and grammar and language books. The old books were badly worn and out-of-date. Something was realized in exchange for the new ones. New geographies will be needed next year, as those now in use are badly worn and the maps are several years out-of-date. Then the schools will be quite well supplied with books, except physiologies. The new books ought to last four or five years, and lessen the appropriation needed for new books.

This would be true if all children took care of the books they use. Some of the children have well used the books, but the manner in which others have treated them is a shame. In spite of all we can do, some books are soon ruined. Soiled hands and rough handling are the chief causes. We earnestly ask the help of the parents in our effort to train children in the right use of public property.

All the school rooms have been supplied with a useful low priced case of maps.

Not all of the schools houses have been supplied with flags and poles required by law.

Nearly all of the school houses in town are now in a good state of repair. The Chippenhook school house needs some minor

repairs, a new door, a window, and brightening up of the interior of the school room and a new floor.

New single seats are very much needed in this, and the East Street buildings. The East Street school room also needs curtains. The Superintendent would recommend that these repairs be made during the coming year, if possible.

The East Clarendon school room ought to have seats before long.

Just before the fall term, the East Street building which was in a very bad condition, was repaired with new doors, lined with paper, and ceiled inside throughout with pine, varnished and painted. The school room has thus been made very comfortable and attractive.

The school houses at the North end of the town have been entirely renovated, and are heated and ventilated by jacketed stoves approved by the state board of health. They are the same old buildings repaired as necessary to make them clean and comfortable against the ravages of the weather.

These school rooms would be very comfortable if they were only large enough. We, who have had the privileges of using and enjoying these buildings are very grateful for the conveniences of improvement over the condition of last year.

While we are grateful for what has been done, and would not wish to unjustly criticize any one, it is the personal opinion of the Superintendent of schools that if some more had been added to the large cost and made new buildings of the necessary size and arrangement, it would have been much better and more economical in the long run.

At present the rooms are too small, and it is necessary to have the seats next to the wall, which is very inconvenient, and in the North Clarendon building is uncomfortable, because of the zephyrs which ooze through the apertures in the walls.

The ventilation and sanitary conditions of the other buildings ought to be improved.

The buildings in the North part of the town were condemned by the state board of health, and something had to be done for provisions for the fall term.

Some of the schools have been late in commencing their terms, but all schools will have the full number of weeks in the year.

When the tax-payers see the financial report, they may feel that an excessive amount has been expended for schools the past year. A little study of the conditions will show that the extra amount expended was unavoidable, and that the school directors have been very judicious in their use of the funds. The repairing of these buildings which had been so long neglected was compulsory; and as it had been several years since new books had been purchased, it became necessary this past year. The school room has been entirely destitute of the maps required by law. Hence it became necessary to meet several items of cost at once.

One very important matter to which we wish to call attention of the parents is school attendance.

The total enrollment for all schools of the town for the year is 141. The average daily attendance was 118, and the per cent of attendance, .8468.

Generally the attendance in the schools has been good, yet there are still too many cases of unexcusable absences.

The attendance in the Clarendon Flats school is worthy of mention. The attendance was perfect throughout the entire term. This is an exceptional record and it is needless to say that such attendance brings excellent school work.

Sections of the school law on attendance were given in last year's report. They are briefly given in the following:

All children between the ages of eight and fifteen years must attend school all the time the school is in session, unless

a physician certifies that the child is unable, and all children above that age who begin a term must finish it.

The teacher *must* notify the truant officer of all absences, and he *must* look up the cases. The truant officer may take a child to school, and he shall notify the parent to keep such child in school. If the child does not then attend school, the parent shall be fined according to law, and the child sent to the reform school when he becomes an habitual truant.

No child under five years of age shall attend any school except a kindergarten. Any child who has never attended school and does not begin at the fall term, cannot commence until the beginning of the next fall term without a written permission of the Superintendent of Schools. Parents are requested to take special notice of this last mentioned section.

Though there have been changes and some failures, the people of Clarendon can feel that the school year has been a success and that the schools are improving. Much commendation is due the teachers for their faithful service. Some of the schools have done excellent work,

The School Directors have worked for the interests of the schools, and they certainly deserve considerate treatment, and much credit for their services to the town. Their work has shown that they are worthy of the confidence of the people they serve, and their judgment in school matters should be trusted. The Superintendent is very grateful for their help and co-operation, and wishes the continuance of their assistance.

The Superintendent of schools wishes to take this opportunity to thank the children of the town for their courtesy to him and for their good work in school. They have made his visit very pleasant.

So far as we know, the people of the town are interested in the schools, and anxious for the education of their children. A few have visited the schools. It would be very encouraging,

and we wish that more would visit the schools and become better acquainted with them.

As there is so much territory to cover, it is impossible for the Superintendent to do what he should for the schools. Perhaps he has not done what he might have done, but with the best intent his year's work and this report is respectfully submitted.

CARROLL H. DROWN,

Superintendent of Schools